

## Creative ideas

### For praying for young people at exam time

*We asked one of the youth leaders in our praying community Ailsa Cummins – who is also a teacher, mum and former student, and therefore has seen this issue from almost every angle – to lead us in praying for teenagers locally and across the country as they prepare for and enter exam season. The ideas in this resource are based on the time she led. We hope they'll help you too.*

*These ideas work particularly well in a small group setting. But they could also be effective in both individual and congregational prayer times. Please feel free to adapt them to suit your setting and emphasis.*

*(You might also be interested to have a look at our creative prayer stations for children and young people – <http://www.thesanctuarycentre.org/resources/prayer-stations-kinnecting-with-God-and-children-and-young-people-in-the-UK.pdf> - especially specially station 4, 'Feeling the squeeze'.)*

**You will need: pens, paper, enough photocopies of an enlarged version of the person outline provided at the end of this document for each person to have one and enough photocopies of the scriptures listed under point 2 for each person to have a section, or the whole thing.**

#### 1. Mind, body, soul, strength...

- Give each person a copy of a body outline and give them a few minutes to think about what young people are facing at exam times. Suggest they think about:
  - Physical demands
  - Mental demands
  - Emotional pressures
  - Spiritual perspectives
  - Relationships and external expectations
- Invite them to write the different things they think about on and around their 'young person'.
- Bring the group back together and get people to feedback what they have been thinking about.
- Have a time of prayer based on these thoughts – you might like to simply pray in silence, offering the young people and all that is facing them up to God or have people praying out loud some of what they want to bring to God in response to what they've thought about and discussed.
- At the end of this time, consider as a group what phrases you might come up with to summarise your heart for young people's identity at this time that help encapsulate what your vision is for how you would like to see themselves and their performance. They might be things like 'loved whatever', 'grace not grades', 'relationships not results', 'excellence of effort and character' or 'human being not human doing'. Invite people to jot these down and take them away with them to help them pray beyond today.

#### 2. Promise prayers

- Use the table of topical scriptures over the page to help you pray for some of the qualities young people will need during exams and some of the truths you want them to remember.

- You could hand out one section to each person, or give everyone all of the sections.
- Encourage people to look up the scriptures and use them as the basis of what they pray over young people in the UK as a result.

**Praying for wisdom**

- Proverbs 1:7
- Proverbs 12:1
- Proverbs 13:1
- Proverbs 13:14
- Proverbs 19:3
- Proverbs 29:1-3

**Praying for a sound mind**

- 2 Timothy 1:7
- Isaiah 23:6
- Philippians 4:6-7
- Proverbs 23:12

**Praying for a firm foundation**

- Proverbs 3:5-6
- Psalm 18:2
- Zechariah 4:6
- Isaiah 41:10

**Praying for a good attitude**

- Philippians 2:5
- Psalm 119:28-29
- Ephesians 4:17-18
- Ephesians 4:23-24
- 1 John 4:18

**Praying for purpose**

- Colossians 3:23
- Ecclesiastes 3:13
- Proverbs 16:3
- Luke 12: 29-31
- Psalm 20:4

**3. Staying connected to young people locally**

- As well as praying for young people across the country, you may well have young people personally known to you, your group or your church that you want to pray for.
- Here are a couple of ideas for how you could pray for them on an ongoing basis through their exams:
  - You could ask them if they'd value prayer and if they would to write their name and the exams they are taking (i.e. SATS, GCSE , AS/A level or degree and/or key subjects). Then write their name out again in a different area of the paper, or on a different slip. Invite each of your pray-ers to take a person or two's name and exam details. And then, write the name of each pray-er on the other, corresponding slip so you can give it back to the student they are praying for. This way everyone knows who's praying for them.
  - Consider collating young people's exam timetables into a giant timetable that you can hand out as a prayer guide so people praying know what days, times and subjects they are sitting. Not only does this help with prayer, it communicates incredible love and value to young people about something so central and important to them.

**3. Beyond UK exam season**

- Take a moment as a group to pray for young people elsewhere in the world who are denied access to the education and exams that they would love to sit. Thank God for all the advances that have been made towards universal, free education (especially at primary level) across the globe and pray that the day would soon come when all children have access to this, irrespective of their country, race, religion or economic background.
- Encourage each person to get their diaries out before they leave and where possible to make a note of results days in their diaries. (AS/A level results come out on the third Thursday of August; GCSEs a day later; and other dates tend to vary and may be different institution to institution.) Suggest they:
  - Pray for young people, locally and nationally again in the couple of weeks surrounding this date too.

- And if they are praying for specific young people, suggest that they write them a card a bit in advance of results with thoughts and prayers, so the emphasis is not just on the results but also on the person, their journey and the work they have put in. (Mention they can always send a second results card if they want to!)

